

## FIRE-FIGHTING EXPERTS SHOW HOW TO PREVENT CONFLAGRATIONS

One Time Chief Croker Says  
Most Big Fires Could Easily  
Have Been Prevented.

## CAUTION IS NEEDED

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN was first to point out in America the wisdom of the prevention. He wrote upon fire prevention and fireproof construction, formed a company to extinguish fires and one to indemnify against fire damage. "If chimneys were more frequently cleaned," Franklin wrote, "some fires might thereby be prevented."

It was Franklin, too, who preached the doctrine that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Destruction of the Equitable Life Assurance Building last Tuesday caused property owners to display a greater interest in fire prevention. Edward F. Croker, formerly Chief of the New York Fire Department, who is accounted the most expert fire fighter in the world, discussing the Equitable Life fire with a HERALD reporter yesterday, declared that the greater number of fires in New York are caused by carelessness.

Joseph Johnson, Fire Commissioner, and Captain William Gierlin, chief of the recently established Bureau of Fire Prevention, thoroughly agree with the view of Mr. Croker. That both the Equitable and the Triangle fires were caused by the careless throwing away of matches is the report which Commissioner Johnson has submitted to Mayor Gaynor.

"How is New York to prevent similar conflagrations in the future?" was the question asked Commissioner Johnson.

"First," he replied, "by a campaign of education to show the value of fire prevention, and second, by a rigid enforcement of the laws which govern upon the Fire Commissioner by the law recently passed creating the Bureau of Fire Prevention."

Commissioner Johnson said that because of the high efficiency of the New York Fire Department, the professional spirit has given the fireman such confidence that there is not a man in the uniformed force who believes that it is possible for New York ever to experience such a conflagration as the Baltimore or San Francisco fire.

"The safeguarding of human life from fire is the first concern of the Fire Department," Commissioner Johnson said. "The saving of property is a secondary though important consideration."

## The First Step.

One of Commissioner Johnson's first steps in his campaign of education was to distribute 75,000 placards for housewives which were labeled "Fire Don'ts," and designated to hang on the wall of the apartment house kitchen. These "don'ts" practically cover the subject of fire prevention in the home, whether this home be apartment, tenement or private dwelling.

The list of "Fire Don'ts" reads:

"Don't block the fire escapes; you may need them yourself to-night."

"Don't leave everything to the landlord. Inspect your own house from cellar to garret and report defects to the owner."

"Don't throw cigars or cigarettes out of windows. They drop on awnings and set them afire."

"Don't allow children to play with matches."

"Don't use matches or candles in dark closets or cellars."

"Don't keep matches except in a tin box with cover attached."

"Don't toss away a match unless completely extinguished, and then toss it into a metal or porcelain receptacle."

"Don't fill lamps or oil stoves while lighted."

"Don't use kerosene oil in lighting fires. Don't put hot ashes on a dumbwaiter."

"Don't accumulate old beds and bedding or other trash in cellars."

"Don't allow delivery boys to back the dumbwaiter door in cellar; by this means fires have spread throughout buildings."

"Don't neglect to have the chimney flue cleaned once a year. You are responsible, not your landlord."

"There are many things," continued Commissioner Johnson, "which the people of New York can do to aid the cause of fire prevention."

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EDWARD F. CROKER.

fire prevention. First, I wish to call attention to the importance of exercising care in the handling of matches, cigarettes, cigars and other fire producers. More fires result in New York from the careless handling of matches than from any other one cause. The Washington place fire and the burning of the Equitable Building last Tuesday both resulted from the careless handling of matches. From the same cause there were 1,379 fires in New York in 1910.

"In the same year 454 fires were caused by the careless handling of candles and tapers. Carelessness with lighted cigars and cigarettes resulted in 825 fires, while overheated stoves and stove pipes caused 516 fires."

"Basements should be kept free from rubbish of any kind. These rubbish heaps are probably the greatest menace to tenement and apartment dwellers. Don't depend upon the janitor in these matters. Make a personal inspection of the cellar over which you live, and if the janitor is reluctant to carry out the fire prevention precautions on the owner's attention to it. If this falls get in touch with the Fire Prevention Bureau at the Fire Department."

"Robert H. Mainzer, banker, of No. 5 Nassau street, who enjoys the distinction of taking more interest in the Fire Department than any private citizen in New York, discussing the question of fire prevention yesterday, said:

"When a structure forty years old is destroyed by fire in this city it is passed over with the remark that nothing about fireproofing was known in those days and that it had to go anyway. What is the destruction of a historical monument ten times as old in France or England would be deemed a national calamity."

"In case all my opinions regarding the question of absolutely fireproof buildings were expressed by the hundreds who share them, a great outcry from the real estate interests would probably result, yet it is not a fact that we are hampered with sufficient non-fireproof material as it is."

## Can Be Prevented.

It is the belief of Edward F. Croker, for twelve years Chief of the Fire Department of New York, who has given up his work for the city to apply himself to the greater task of educating the people of the United States how best to prevent fires, with their attendant loss of life and property, that the average fire can be prevented. Mr. Croker has devoted thirty years to educating the people of the United States how best to prevent fires, with their attendant loss of life and property, that the average fire can be prevented. Mr. Croker has devoted thirty years to educating the people of the United States how best to prevent fires, with their attendant loss of life and property, that the average fire can be prevented.

"Both the Triangle and the Equitable fires can be attributed to carelessness," Mr. Croker said to a HERALD reporter yesterday.

"Carelessness, sometimes criminal carelessness, is the cause of the average fire. In industrial plants, where fires have caused a considerable loss of life, such as the Triangle building fire in Washington place last year, carelessness is often responsible for the great loss of life and property. It is my belief that this general carelessness may be partly overcome by the installation of proper fire protection methods in such establishments."

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FIRST FIRE ENGINE IN AMERICA, PRESENTED BY KING GEORGE III, TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT OF SHELLBURNE, NOVA SCOTIA IN 1774.

## Edward F. Croker's Rules for Fire Prevention

Compulsory fire drill in all mercantile houses, factories and institutions employing or containing more than twenty-five persons; the organization of such employees into fire brigades, with a retired fireman in charge to instruct such brigades properly to use auxiliary fire appliances pending the arrival of the Fire Department, and in addition to be on duty constantly during working hours to patrol premises, inspect fire appliances and note condition of premises as to being free from rubbish, waste materials and other inflammable matter likely to cause or promote fire.

The installation of approved sprinkler systems and modern automatic fire alarms in certain classes of buildings are of particular advantage in discovering and extinguishing fires in their incipency and of considerable value to the Fire Department in fighting fires.

The equipment of various premises with auxiliary fire appliances of the most approved type, with periodic inspection of same, should be insisted upon in all classes of buildings.

Smoking in factories during working hours to be PROHIBITED and offenders severely punished for any infraction of this rule.

All buildings three stories or more in height to be provided with fire escapes and standpipes for Fire Department use.

Fire doors and shutters to be closed every night, and stock should never be placed so as to hinder the ready closing of these fire stops.

All doors should be made to open or swing outward. Safety matches should be required by law; all other kinds strictly prohibited.

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Ashes should be kept in metal receptacles—never in wooden barrels or boxes.

Oil rags should be kept in metal waste cans and contents removed each night.

Rubbish should never be allowed to accumulate in buildings of any description.

Gasoline, naphtha and other volatile liquids should not be kept in building.

Gas brackets should have rigid fixtures; where necessary to use swiveling brackets all exposed woodwork should be protected with sheet metal, leaving an air space. Metal bells should be placed over gas jets on low ceilings.

Steam pipes should be kept clear from all wood and other combustible material.

Open fireplaces should be protected with sheet iron or, better, be bricked up.

Electricity when improperly installed is hazardous; see that your certificate of approval covers the entire installation; lamp cords should not be hung on nails or wrapped around any piping; paper shades should never be used. Do not allow employees to tamper with electrical installations.

Storepipes should be run direct to brick chimneys and never through floors or partitions; protect floors under and about stores with brick, cement or sheet metal.

All apartments and private houses, as well as other buildings, should be provided with a modern three gallon fire extinguisher. There is no reason why people, especially women, should take alarm from a small fire; they can easily handle an extinguisher and promptly extinguish it if they keep cool.

"The fire loss in this country, both in lives and property, can be greatly reduced if the proper preventive measures are adopted."

"I fought the fire demon in New York for twenty-seven years, and throughout those years I was steadily and irresistibly led to the conclusion that, while the fire

to-morrow," says her friend. "It is in honor of my sister and I have just arranged it on a moment's notice. I tried to phone you this morning, but you were out."

"I'd be delighted," says Mrs. Jones, "but I hope it isn't too terribly fashionable. I shall have to wear a very simple hat, I am afraid. I haven't purchased all my winter millinery yet."

Mrs. Brown assures her that a simple hat will be all that is necessary, and will doubtless become her wardrobe. Mrs. Jones returns to the millinery department and selects the most elaborate and elegant hat she can find.

"I would like this sent to my home," she says, "and charged." "And I can return it," she satisfies me, but if not I will return it."

"I guess that will turn Mrs. Brown green with envy," she adds to herself as she leaves the department. "And I can send it back the day after the luncheon."

As a climax to the day's activities Mrs. Jones visits the premium department. Here she produces coupons which she has collected from various purchases and which have been given to her by friends who do not save them. She inspects most of the goods which may be had in exchange for coupons, and has a sample of pretty nearly everything she selects some silver toilet articles worth about five dollars. These she has sent to her home.

The stage converses her to the point where she left the trolley car in the morning. There she boards a cross-town car and gazes nonchalantly at an advertisement on the opposite side of the car as she hands her long since expired transfer to the conductor.

The car is crowded and the conductor in the press of his work neglects to notice the time punched on the transfer ticket. Mrs. Jones obtains another transfer and leaves the cross-town car for one which takes her within a short walk from her home. During the ride uptown she takes a mental account of her expenditures.

"One must watch these store people so closely," she says to herself, for they will get the better of you. Now, wonder—I just wonder, if they beat me out of anything to-day."

"Some day when I leave the ministry," Dr. Eaton said, "this will be my home. It is a home I have made with my own hands and one I'm proud of. When the stress of pastoral work has died out and I see that a younger and more active man is required to fill my pulpit, I can step down, secure in the knowledge that I have provided for the proverbial rainy day, and that a roof is still over my head. Some of my brother ministers will appreciate what this means."

Dr. Eaton is chaplain of the New York Hotel Men's Association and his home is a rendezvous for a score of men who conduct the fashionable hotels of the city. They know that their chaplain will provide them with the very best his garden grows.

"One can't hope to be a popular preacher always," Dr. Eaton said, "and the time has come when I must look to the future. I have a family of growing boys and girls. If anything should happen to my health, or for any other reason I was deprived

of a charge, I would find it difficult in my old age to make a living. Then, too, we wanted to rear our boys and girls in the open—in the country, where they could live close to nature, enjoy its beauties and derive those benefits and pleasures which only the country affords."

"A boy or girl reared in the city loses half of the joys of living. They are stunted from the very start, and I look upon it as a crime for any parent who can afford to take his children to the country to keep them cooped up in city homes or flats."

"We found just the place we wanted in the country. It's perched on the side of a wild rugged mountain chain, with an exquisite view, fertile field, all well watered and happily enjoying the benefits of a southern exposure. We made a clearing for the house or bungalow, and our lawn is in reality a virgin forest. We enjoy luxuries there we couldn't possibly afford in the city, and after two or three years of hard work on my part I've got the farm on such a paying basis that it practically gives us our living."

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Equitable Building Was Put  
Up When Modern Fireproof-  
ing Was Unknown.

## CITIZENS MUST HELP

the work of the Fire Prevention Bureau will tend to greatly reduce the number of fires in New York.

That one of the most notable fires in the history of New York was a blaze on the twenty-sixth floor of the Singer Building on September 29, 1910, is the opinion of Mr. Croker. Combustible material in a room was a mass of flames before discovered, he said, and if the building had not been a really fireproof structure there would have been a conflagration the like of which New York has never seen.

Louis Jay Horowitz, president of the Thompson-Starrett Company, was asked yesterday whether or not a fire similar to that which occurred in the Equitable Building would, if it occurred in one of the modern office buildings, be attended by the same consequences.

"No, it would not," he replied. "You must know that the Equitable Life Building was built before the most important protective features now employed for fireproof buildings were known."

## Shaft and Flue.

"When the flames reached the elevator shaft of the Equitable Building, instead of being confined to the shaft, the shaft acted as a dangerous flue, because its construction permitted the flames to get out of one of the shaft and attack the heavy wood trim, the wood wainscoting in many cases, and other inflammable material stored on the floors."

"In a modern building, in addition to the elevator shaft being built of fireproof material, the door openings are so constructed as to confine the fire within the limits of the shaft. The door openings of the Equitable Building allowed the flames to escape."

"When the inflammable material referred to caught fire and the flames attacked the floor construction the soffits of the beams, being simply plastered, crumbled off, and as a consequence the steel beams supporting the arches buckled and many of the floors collapsed. The fireproofing methods in vogue at the time the Equitable was built, and, as a matter of fact, until quite recently, did not call for the proper protection of the soffits of the beams